

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 1995

USIAC

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SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE BY SECRETARY GENERAL OF OAS

THE FREE PRESS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE HAS A FUNDAMENTAL TENDENCY TO REPORT NEWS OBJECTIVELY, ACCORDING TO ALEJANDRO ORFILA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES.

"I BELIEVE IN FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, AND THE MORE FREEDOM THE BETTER," DECLARED THE OAS OFFICIAL AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN PORT AU PRINCE THE EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE JULY 28 FOR SANTO DOMINGO AFTER A 4-DAY VISIT TO HAITI. HE MADE THESE REMARKS IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED UNESCO COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE IN SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA.

MR. ORFILA NOTED THAT A SAN JOSE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE CREATION OF AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL INFORMATION ORGANISM IS NOT A NEW ONE. MEMBER STATES OF THE OAS, HE SAID, "HAVE LONG HARBORED THE DESIRE TO CREATE AN ENTERPRISE OR AN AGENCY TO INFORM THE REST OF THE WORLD ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT THE REST OF THE WORLD TO KNOW ABOUT THEM, BUT SUCH INITIATIVES HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL."

HE OBSERVED THAT ANY ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUAL THAT REPORTS NEWS

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HAS NATURAL BIASES, BUT THAT THE OVERWHELMING TENDENCY OF NEWS

SERVICES IS TO BE OBJECTIVE. IN GENERAL, SAID THE SECRETARY
GENERAL, "I AM NOT OPPOSED TO ANY PRESS ORGANIZATION WHICH SEEKS
TO BETTER INFORM THE PUBLIC."

IN HIS OPENING REMARKS MR ORFILA UNDERSCORED THE IMPORTANCE OF
THE PRESS, NOTING THAT IT HAS THE FREEDOM NOT ONLY TO REPORT ON
OAS DEVELOPMENT BUT ALSO TO OFFER OPINIONS AND EVEN CRITICIZE
ITS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS. AS IF TO FURTHER EMPHASIZE HIS
APPRECIATION FOR THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA, HE CONCLUDED
BY THANKING THE HAITIAN PRESS AND THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS
AGENCIES IN HAITI FOR THE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF HIS CURRENT
VISIT. DURING HIS STAY IN HAITI HE SPENT MOST OF THE DAY VISITING
MAJOR NEWSPAPERS, RADIO STATIONS AND THE TELEVISION STATION.
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